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The Rooms We Carry

Marcel Ray Duriez 11 min read · May 13, 2026

Recovery Group Theme & Lesson Plan

Core Theme

Some places never fully leave us.

A person may walk out of a childhood home, a jail cell, a hospital room, a detox center, a toxic relationship, or a house filled with addiction — yet emotionally still revisit those spaces every day. The mind stores environments the same way it stores memories. Certain rooms become attached to fear, shame, loneliness, comfort, grief, survival, or healing.

In recovery, people often discover they are not only healing from substances — they are healing from the emotional environments connected to them.

“The Rooms We Carry” explores how places shape identity, behavior, trauma responses, emotional triggers, and hope for the future.

Therapeutic Discussion Points

1. Emotional Rooms

Some rooms become emotional prisons. Others become emotional sanctuaries.

Questions:

What emotional “rooms” do you still mentally revisit?

Are there places you avoid because of memories?

What environments made you feel unsafe?

What places made you feel loved or accepted?

What room changed your life forever?

2. Addiction & Environment

Addiction is often connected to surroundings:

The bedroom where isolation happened

The bar stool

The trap house

The hospital bed

The friend’s basement

The motel room

The silence after loss

Environmental memory can trigger cravings, anxiety, panic, grief, or relapse thinking.

Discussion:

What environments strengthened your addiction?

What environments protected your recovery?

What spaces make you feel emotionally heavy?

What places help you breathe easier?

3. Trauma Rooms

Trauma is often attached to physical places.

The brain remembers:

Smells

Sounds

Lighting

Music

Voices

Seasons

Hallways

Empty chairs

A person may re-enter a memory emotionally without physically returning there.

Discussion:

Have you ever felt emotionally transported back somewhere?

What places still affect your nervous system?

How do certain environments affect your mood today?

4. Recovery Rooms

Recovery creates new rooms:

Meeting rooms

Counseling offices

Churches

Gyms

Art spaces

Bedrooms cleaned after chaos

Coffee tables with journals instead of substances

Healing environments teach the brain safety again.

Discussion:

What room first gave you hope?

Where do you feel most peaceful today?

What environment helps you stay sober?

What does a healthy room feel like emotionally?

Activity: Draw the Rooms

Participants can draw, journal, or verbally describe three rooms.

Room One — The Addiction Room

Describe:

Colors

Lighting

Smells

Feelings

Sounds

Isolation or chaos

Who was there?

What emotions lived there?

Room Two — The Recovery Room

Describe:

What healing looks like

What changed emotionally

What safety feels like

What new habits exist there

What hope looks like inside the room

Room Three — The Future Room

Describe the life you hope to enter:

Peace?

Family?

Stability?

Creativity?

Purpose?

Spirituality?

Freedom?

Education?

Love?

Self-respect?

This room represents identity reconstruction and future visualization.

Therapeutic Focus

Psychological Themes

Trauma memory

Environmental conditioning

Emotional attachment
Trigger recognition
Identity reconstruction
Future-oriented thinking
Safety reconditioning
Neuroplasticity in recovery
Five Reflective Questions
What room from your past still emotionally affects you today?
What environment made your addiction stronger?
What space helped you begin healing?
What emotional feeling do you want your future room to hold?
If your life became a room, what would you want people to feel when they entered it?
Short Recovery Reflection
Recovery is sometimes less about escaping the past and more about building new rooms inside the mind. A person may carry memories of pain, addiction, abandonment, grief, or fear for years, but healing begins when new environments are created — emotionally, spiritually, physically, and socially. Safe conversations, honest reflection, healthy routines, and supportive people slowly redesign the internal architecture of the self. Over time, the rooms once filled with chaos can become rooms of wisdom, survival, compassion, and growth.
Closing Group Statement
“You are allowed to leave the rooms that hurt you.
You are allowed to build new ones.
And you are allowed to become a place of peace for yourself.”

The Rooms We Carry
Three Moral Paragraphs
1. The Moral Weight of Environment

Every environment leaves fingerprints on the human mind. The rooms we grow up in, suffer in, heal in, or survive in become part of our emotional architecture. A person who lived through addiction, abuse, grief, violence, abandonment, or chaos may carry those environments internally long after physically leaving them. Morally, this teaches us that people are often fighting invisible battles connected to places nobody else can see. Compassion grows when we realize behavior is sometimes rooted in emotional survival learned inside painful environments.

2. Healing Requires New Spaces

Recovery is not only about stopping destructive behavior; it is about creating new emotional rooms where peace, honesty, structure, and safety can exist. Many people in addiction learned how to survive in chaos but never learned how to live in calmness. Morally, healing asks people to rebuild their inner world through accountability, support, healthy relationships, spirituality, honesty, and self-respect. A healthy environment can slowly teach the nervous system that safety is possible again.

3. The Future Room We Build

Every choice creates the “future room” we will eventually live inside emotionally. The words we speak, the people we surround ourselves with, and the habits we repeat become the walls of tomorrow’s life. Recovery teaches that a person is not permanently trapped in the rooms of their past. Even after trauma, addiction, incarceration, loss, or emotional collapse, human beings can redesign their lives. Morally, this reminds us that hope is an act of construction—building a life that future versions of ourselves can survive inside peacefully.

10 Group Questions

What room from your life still emotionally affects you today?

What environment made you feel the most alone?

What place made your addiction stronger?

What room or environment first gave you hope?

How do certain smells, sounds, or memories trigger emotions?
What kind of emotional “room” do you currently live in mentally?
What would safety look like inside your future room?
What people would be allowed inside your healing environment?
What habits or behaviors no longer belong in your future room?
If your life became a room others entered, what would you want them to feel?

Long Essay—The Rooms We Carry

Human beings are deeply connected to environments. Every room a person has ever lived in, cried in, celebrated in, feared in, or survived in leaves emotional residue on the mind. A childhood bedroom, a hospital room, a jail cell, a detox center, an abandoned apartment, a classroom, a church pew, or a funeral home can all become emotionally symbolic spaces stored inside memory. Long after someone physically leaves these places, the emotions attached to them may continue living within the nervous system.

For individuals struggling with addiction, trauma, grief, anxiety, depression, or emotional instability, environments often become psychological triggers. The brain remembers details connected to survival and emotional intensity. A certain hallway, smell, song, season, lighting pattern, or even silence can immediately transport a person back into an emotional state connected to the past. Sometimes the body reacts before the mind fully understands why. This is why many people in recovery say they feel like they are “still living in old rooms.”

Addiction itself is frequently connected to environments. Substance use rarely exists in isolation. There are houses tied to relapse, bedrooms connected to depression, streets tied to survival, and social circles connected to emotional pain. Some people used substances in environments filled with loneliness, abuse, instability, or emotional neglect. Over time, the brain begins associating those environments with coping, escape, or numbness. Even after sobriety begins, those emotional rooms can continue calling the

mind backward.

Trauma strengthens this process. Traumatic environments often become frozen memories inside the nervous system. A person may leave an abusive household physically but still react emotionally as though danger is present years later. This is why healing is not simply about changing locations. Recovery requires emotional reconstruction. It requires teaching the brain, body, and spirit that safety can exist again.

This is where healing environments become important. Recovery rooms, support groups, therapy offices, churches, gyms, art spaces, and healthy homes can slowly replace destructive emotional associations with healthier ones. The human mind is adaptable. Through neuroplasticity, new experiences can help rebuild emotional pathways connected to safety, trust, calmness, and identity. Small changes matter. A clean room, a journal, healthy conversations, supportive friendships, and routines can become symbolic signs of stability and growth.

One of the most powerful ideas in recovery is the concept of the “future room.” This room does not physically exist yet, but emotionally it represents the life someone hopes to build. It may contain peace, forgiveness, sobriety, education, family, purpose, creativity, spirituality, or emotional freedom. Visualizing this room helps individuals begin separating themselves from the environments that once defined them. Instead of being trapped inside old emotional architecture, they begin building something new.

The Rooms We Carry reminds us that healing is deeply connected to environment, memory, emotion, and identity. Some rooms break people down, while others rebuild them. Recovery is often the process of learning which rooms must be left behind, which rooms deserve healing, and which rooms still need to be created inside the self.

Talking Topics for Group Discussion

Addiction & Environment

How places influence behavior

Environmental relapse triggers
Houses, people, and routines connected to addiction
Emotional attachment to destructive spaces
Trauma & Memory
Why the brain remembers painful environments
PTSD and emotional flashbacks
Smells, music, seasons, and sensory triggers
Survival responses connected to places
Recovery & Neuroplasticity
Building new emotional habits
Safe spaces in recovery
How healthy environments reshape thinking
Creating structure and emotional stability
Identity Reconstruction
Leaving old versions of ourselves behind
Rebuilding self-worth
Learning to feel safe again
Designing a future life emotionally
Hope & Future Visualization
What does your future room look like?
What emotions belong there?
What people belong there?
What no longer belongs in your life?

Why “The Rooms We Carry” Works

“The Rooms We Carry” works because it connects recovery, trauma, memory, identity, and emotion into something people can immediately visualize and personally relate to. Instead of speaking only about addiction or mental health in clinical language, it transforms emotional experiences into physical spaces people understand instinctively. Almost everyone

remembers certain rooms in their life emotionally.

A person may forget exact conversations, but they remember:

The bedroom where they cried

The hospital room where fear entered

The kitchen where family conflict happened

The jail cell

The detox room

The empty apartment

The meeting room where hope began

The mind stores emotional experiences through association. Neuroscience shows that the brain connects memory with environment, sound, smell, lighting, emotion, and survival responses. Trauma especially becomes attached to locations. This means environments can trigger:

Anxiety

Cravings

Shame

Fear

Nostalgia

Grief

Anger

Emotional shutdown

That is why people in recovery often say: “I feel like I’m back there again.”

The group works therapeutically because it externalizes internal pain. Instead of saying: “I feel damaged,” participants can say: “I still live emotionally inside certain rooms.”

This creates emotional safety. People become more willing to talk when emotions are described symbolically instead of directly. The metaphor lowers defensiveness while increasing honesty.

Why It Works Psychologically

1. Environmental Memory

The brain remembers places connected to emotional intensity. Trauma and addiction strengthen this process because survival emotions become deeply encoded in memory.

A hallway, smell, season, or song can instantly reactivate emotional states.

This group helps participants recognize:

Triggers

Emotional flashbacks

Environmental conditioning

Trauma attachment

2. Visualization Creates Emotional Access

Many individuals in addiction recovery struggle to explain emotions directly.

But asking: “What room are you still living in emotionally?” creates imagery.

Imagery activates emotional reflection more naturally than clinical questioning alone.

The metaphor:

simplifies complex trauma,

increases openness,

and improves communication.

3. Identity Reconstruction

Addiction often traps people in old identities tied to old environments.

“The Rooms We Carry” introduces the idea that:

you can leave rooms mentally,

build healthier rooms emotionally,

and create a future room intentionally.

This shifts participants from survival thinking into future-oriented thinking.

That is psychologically powerful because hope requires visualization.

4. It Combines Trauma & Hope

The group does not only focus on pain.

It also asks:

What rooms healed you?

What does your future room look like?

What belongs in your future environment?

This balances trauma exploration with recovery motivation.

Too much focus on trauma alone can emotionally overwhelm participants.

Too much positivity alone can feel fake. This lesson combines both honestly.

Why It Works in Recovery Groups

It Creates Universal Connection

Everyone has rooms they remember emotionally. This makes the group relatable across:

addiction,

grief,

PTSD,

incarceration,

family trauma,

depression,

anxiety,

and recovery.

It Encourages Vulnerability Safely

People often disclose deeper emotions indirectly through metaphor.

Saying: “My addiction room was dark and empty” can feel emotionally safer than directly discussing shame or trauma immediately.

It Helps Participants Visualize Change

Recovery becomes something visible:

a cleaner room,

open windows,

light,

peace,

structure,

support,

purpose.

This helps individuals mentally picture a life beyond survival.

Topics It Opens Naturally

Addiction & Environment

How surroundings shape behavior.

Trauma & Memory

Why painful places stay emotionally alive.

Neuroplasticity

How healing environments reshape the brain.

Emotional Triggers

How sensory memories affect recovery.

Identity Reconstruction

Building a new internal life.

Future Visualization

Creating hope through mental imagery.

Deeper Meaning

"The Rooms We Carry" ultimately teaches that recovery is not only about leaving substances behind. It is about emotionally leaving environments that no longer serve survival, healing from the rooms that wounded us, and building internal spaces where peace can finally exist.

The most powerful part of the lesson is this:

A person may not control the rooms they came from, but they can help build the room they live in next.

The official art gallery and portfolio for Marcel Ray Duriez is:

https://duriez19.wixsite.com/marcelrayduriezart

Marcel Ray Duriez Artwork Gallery

The gallery presents a large collection of original artworks, illustrations, digital paintings, and portfolio pieces connected to Marcel's broader creative universe, including the Nevaeh Saga. The site describes his work as blending storytelling, fine art, fantasy, surrealism, emotional symbolism, and

multimedia design.

Duriez19 +1

Highlights featured on the site include:

Over 400–700 artworks spanning illustration, painting, and digital media

Fantasy, horror, emotional, and surrealist-inspired themes

Integrated visual storytelling connected to novels and music

Graphic design and multimedia artwork

Author-and-illustrator portfolio material

Educational and artistic background from the The Art Institute of Pittsburgh and other institutions

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You can also explore the broader official website here:

Official Marcel Ray Duriez Website

That main site includes books, educational writings, music, artwork collections, press material, and creative archives tied to the larger "Duriezian" body of work.

Duriez19

Marcel Ray Duriez — Full Life and Career Story

Marcel Ray Duriez is an American author, artist, and polymath best known for creating the **Nevaeh Saga**, a literary project recognized by Guinness World Records as the **longest novel in the world** at over 13–14 million words (83.25 million characters) duriez19.wixsite.com. Born in **1991** in Northern Cambria, Pennsylvania, Duriez grew up as an outcast due to bullying, trauma, and early exposure to human trafficking at age four duriez.weebly.com. Despite being labeled "mentally challenged" by some, he was described as brilliant and self-aware, often feeling misunderstood and marginalized duriez.weebly.com.

Early Life and Influences

Duriez's formative years were marked by social alienation, mental health struggles, and a deep sense of injustice. These experiences became central themes in his work, particularly in the Nevaeh Saga, which blends **fantasy, magical realism, trauma, and mythic archetypes** Medium+1. His writing often reflects the internal and external worlds of those who feel "different" in society, drawing on biblical and spiritual imagery to explore identity, suffering, and transformation Medium.

Career and Literary Achievements

- **First major work**: *The Many Adventures of Cuddles: Tobey, Pandora and Cuddles* (2012) FictionDB.
- **Nevaeh Saga**: A sprawling 95-volume (as of his count) series chronicling the life of Nevaeh May Natalie, a fictionalized reflection of his own struggles. The saga spans fantasy, realism, and psychological introspection, with themes of resilience, self-determination, and the search for meaning duriez.weebly.com+1.

- **Guinness World Records:** His *Nevaeh Saga* holds multiple records, including:
- **Longest Novel** (verified at ~13–14 million words) duriez19.wixsite.com.
- **Most Novels in a Detective Series with the Same Protagonist** (surpassed by 8 books) duriez19.wixsite.com.
- **Most Contributions to a Published Work of Fiction** (413 contributors) duriez19.wixsite.com.
- **Other creative pursuits**: Musician, artist, and educator, with a focus on youth empowerment and literacy duriez19.wixsite.com+1.

Themes and Style

Duriez's writing is known for its **nonlinear, stream-of-consciousness style**, rich sensory detail, and emotional candor. He fuses cinematic imagery with psychological depth, creating a narrative that feels both intimate and epic Medium. The Nevaeh Saga is not just a story but a **literary protest** against stigma, disability, and systemic neglect, aiming to give voice to those silenced by society duriez.weebly.com.

Personal Mission

Beyond his records, Duriez is committed to:

- Ending human trafficking in schools and communities.
- Reducing stigma and misunderstanding toward youth.
- Encouraging self-expression and resilience in young people duriez.weebly.com.

Legacy

At 31, Duriez has already achieved what many consider a **lifetime achievement** in literature — producing a work of unprecedented scale and depth. His life story mirrors the themes of his fiction: from marginalization to myth-making, from personal pain to global recognition. The Nevaeh Saga stands as both a personal testament and a cultural artifact, blending art, philosophy, and activism into one monumental narrative Archive+1.

Written by Marcel Ray Duriez

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Author, musician, and artist

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